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### CIRCUMSTANTIAL—TEMPORAL CUM-CLAUSES

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding the article, Where the Latin Grammar Fails, which appeared in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 9. 153-157. Its chief thesis was that the statements of principles of syntax in the Grammars often fail to meet the needs of students who are attempting to write Latin.

A striking illustration was found in the treatment of circumstantial and temporal *cum*-clauses of the past. Most students of Latin composition have great difficulty in applying the rule provided by the Grammar because they do not really understand what is meant by 'circumstantial' as contrasted with 'temporal'. As a matter of fact many instantly classify as temporal any clause introduced by the word *when*.

Not only do the students thus wrest the rule to their own destruction; it is more than doubtful whether the Grammars themselves are correct in attempting to draw a hard and fast modal line between circumstantial and purely temporal clauses. There is evidence in abundance that the subjunctive had penetrated, particularly in the writings of Caesar, far into the purely temporal *cum*-clause. In Cicero, too, there are plenty of such cases; e.g.

Cat. 3. 6: *ipsi comprehensi ad me, cum iam dilucesceret, deducuntur.*

Tusc. Disp. 2. 34: *Spartae vero pueri ad aram sic verberibus accipiuntur, ut. . . sanguis exeat, nonnumquam etiam, ut, cum ibi essem, audiebam, ad necem.*

Under these circumstances some teachers may be willing to worry along with the Grammar rule as it stands, on the ground that it rests upon a plausible theory as to the spread of the use of the subjunctive mood in the *cum*-clause, historically considered, and that it 'explains' the use of the mood.

On the other hand, it may be remembered that not every rule in the Grammar *explains*; some rules merely state facts. And, for the teaching of Latin composition, a mere rule of thumb that is workable is better than a rule that professes to explain, but which really confuses. Thus the old-fashioned statement that *cum*-temporal (i.e. circumstantial-temporal) introduces the imperfect and pluperfect subjunctive and the indicative of other tenses—qualified by the exception that repeated action calls for the indicative—describes the situation very well, at least as far as a second year student needs to know it<sup>1</sup>; and the great majority of our students do not carry the work beyond the second year.

Mr. Byrne's Syntax of High School Latin shows that in De Bello Gallico 1-4 Caesar uses past tenses 134 times in circumstantial-temporal clauses introduced

by *cum*. But eight indicatives in all are used. The three perfects are provided for under the old-fashioned rule. Of the four pluperfects, three come under the exception for repeated action (B.G. 3. 14, 4.17 bis); and the fourth (B.G. 3. 15) is also a case of repeated action, but with the variant reading *circumsisterent*. The old-fashioned rule then, with its exception for repeated action, gives simple and explicit directions that cover 132 (perhaps 133) of the 134 cases of past tenses in circumstantial-temporal *cum*-clauses in the De Bello Gallico 1-4.

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H. C. NUTTING.

### THE NEW YORK LATIN CLUB

The forty-eighth regular (sixteenth annual) meeting of The New York Latin Club was held Saturday, April 29, at Hunter College, with an attendance of one hundred and thirty.

Professor Andrew F. West, Dean of Princeton University, spoke on the Teaching of Latin. He declared that the teacher of Latin had two problems to face, the one, external, the commercial spirit of the age, the other, internal, the matter of method, and the lack of time. In regard to the first, he said that the present revolt against classical studies was merely a part of the general revolt against disciplining the mind, which has grown out of the making of studies elective. This is not a departure *in* education but *from* education. He urged all who believe in the Classics to rally and take the offensive in order that the country may be safe-guarded against illiteracy. In regard to the second point, Professor West's remedy is to begin Latin earlier, but not with Caesar and Cicero, and in place of the four year course to substitute a six year course. The child should get his first impression of Latin at the age of ten or twelve, through *hearing*; this should be reenforced by *writing* and *seeing*. The subject-matter should be agreeable to the consciousness of a child, about familiar things and acts of common life. The vocabulary can be obtained from Plautus, Terence, Cicero's Letters, and particularly from the sermons of St. Augustine. In this way a Latin consciousness can be developed and the way paved gradually for the greatest of all difficulties in Latin, the periodic structure.

Dr. W. F. Tibbetts, the Treasurer, reported that the Latin Scholarship Fund amounts to \$5558, and the Greek Scholarship Fund to \$2600. This year, the Greek prize will be \$100, but, as soon as the Fund reaches \$5000, the annual award, like the Latin prize, will be \$250.

The officers for 1916-1917 are: President, Professor G. M. Whicher, of Hunter College; Vice-President, Professor W. E. Waters, of New York University; Secretary, Mr. M. F. Lawton, of Bay Ridge High School; Treasurer, Dr. W. F. Tibbetts, of Curtis High School; and Censor, Miss J. G. Carter, of Hunter College.

JANE G. CARTER, Censor.

<sup>1</sup>I venture to think that Professor Nutting's own statement is not as clear as it might be. One of the tenses other than the imperfect and the pluperfect is the perfect, is it not? Does not Professor Nutting's statement leave open the possibility of using the perfect indicative in a *cum*-clause? How, then, does his rule really help? Just *when* is the perfect indicative to be used in such a clause rather than the imperfect subjunctive or the pluperfect subjunctive? If what is wanted is a "rule of thumb" that will really work, then why not put the matter as follows?

In *cum*-clauses that lie in the past sphere, use the imperfect or the pluperfect subjunctive always (with emphasis on the pluperfect subjunctive).

The application of this rule will now and then lead to errors, but seldom after all. Certainly, the Latin written under this "rule of thumb" will be far better than the Latin now written by many in accordance with the statements that obtain in our Grammars.

There is, to be sure, a very important question involved in all this—how far it is wise, particularly for those who believe in the disciplinary value of Latin or in the value of the study of Latin as a means of getting better control of English, to encourage the use of a "mere rule of thumb", and by so much to discourage thinking, or to render it unnecessary.